



Generator Safety



Many residents who lose power may turn to emergency generators to ensure a continuous flow of electricity to refrigerators, freezers, lights, fans and other appliances. While generators are a convenience in keeping appliances running during storm-related outages, they can also create hazards for homeowners and public service workers. The City of Alachua urges residents to exercise extreme caution when using an emergency generator.

When operating a generator:

- Always operate a generator in accordance with manufacturer's guidelines and instructions. Do not operate more appliances and equipment than the output rating of the generator.
- To avoid carbon monoxide poisoning, never use a generator indoors or in attached garages. Only operate the generator outdoors in a well-ventilated, dry area away from air intakes to the home.
- To avoid electrocution, plug individual appliances into the generator using heavy duty, outdoor rated cords with a wire gauge adequate for the appliance load.
- If connecting into the house wiring is necessary on a temporary basis, homes should have a transfer switch installed by a licensed electrician. A transfer switch allows your house to receive power directly from a portable generator as opposed to through the main circuit breaker normally supplied by the City of Alachua. Transfer switches isolate the circuits supplied by the generator and prevent back feeding generator power out to the City's electric distribution system.
- Back feeding can most commonly occur when a generator is connected directly to the electric panel or circuit in a home. Feeding power back into the utility system during an outage will energize the transformer serving the house and could pose a serious threat to public service workers and tree crews working to restore power in the area who may not know they are working with an energized line.